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[Title Page]

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ATCHIN TWENTY YEARS AGO

JOHN W. LAYARD

105 ATCHIN[1] is one of a string of five small coral islands, the others being Vao, Wala, Rano, and Uripiv, lying off the north-east coast of Malekula, the inhabitants of which form an ethnic unit and refer to themselves as Sea Folk in contra-distinction to what they term the Bush Folk of the Malekulan mainland. The islands are remarkably uniform, both in size and situation, each covering an area of about half a square mile, and being separated from the mainland by a channel about half a mile wide. Each island supports a population of from four hundred to five hundred varying in physique and in intelligence as much as any average English community, from individuals with comparatively light copper-coloured skin and a degree of intelligence equal at least to that of an intelligent white man, to those of much darker pigmentation and minds approximating more closely to the white man's idea of what he is pleased to call a "savage." Since there is no room for cultivation, the inhabitants of each island own a strip of land on that part of the Malekulan mainland immediately opposite to it, on which they till their gardens. In addition to the communally owned long-distance canoes, in which they sail long distances on trading expeditions, each man possesses a coastal canoe, and the fleet of small canoes sailing or paddling over to the mainland every morning during the agricultural season and returning at night laden with food is one of the most pleasing sights that can be seen in Malekula.

Though forming an ethnic unit, these islands have no central government, nor are there any chiefs such as exist among the Big Nambas of the North Malekulan Plateau. Each of these minute communities (the population of Atchin at the time of my visit numbered 401) has its own language, as distinct from that of its neighbours as any two cognate European languages, and is

101 [1] With regard to the origin of the word "Atchin," the name given to this island by its own inhabitants is *tsun*, to which, when speaking of it from afar, is prefixed the directional particle *nga*. The work of the Admiralty Survey on these islands is on the whole correct, so that I was puzzled by the considerable divergence in sound between the words *nga-tsun* and Atchin. A second puzzle was presented by the fact that the names given on the Admiralty Chart for the only three Malekulan mountains marked in the vicinity of Atchin were not the names of mountains at all, but the names of villages situated much nearer the coast, in a dialect which differed somewhat both from the Malekulan and from the Atchin pronunciation. Nor did there appear to be any directional relationship between the mountains and the respective villages which were alleged to bear their names. This conundrum remained unsolved till, on visiting the neighbouring island of Wala, I found that in the language spoken there the name for Atchin was *tsin* and the directional particle *a*. From the much closer approximation of the white man's word Atchin to the Wala *a-tsin* it occurred to me that the surveying party, or that section of it which had recorded the name, probably landed on Wala. This supposition was confirmed on finding that the names of the three villages, wrongly used for mountains (viz. Rarab, Batelembe, and Lalembe), were also in the Wala dialect, and that the villages themselves were situated in an approximately direct line between the mountains and Wala. Though I have not looked up the records, it is thus clear that the surveyors, standing on Wala, were given not only the name Atchin, but also, when pointing at the mountains, were given the names, not of the mountains, but of the intervening villages to which the natives thought they were pointing.

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possessed of an extremely complex social organization by means of which each island is divided asymmetrically into nameless halves, each rivalling the other and ready at any moment to develop into two hostile groups. In the island of Vao, which preserves the oldest form of social organization in the group, one-half comprises one double village, and the other half two double villages. As with the two halves of the island, so each of the two double villages in the larger half is apt to become hostile to the other, as also is each single village within the unit of the double village. Each single village is further subdivided into two divisions called "Sides of the Stone," which in turn are divided into two family groups, each of which is again subdivided into two smaller family groups.[1] Each village possesses a dancing-ground and central village lodge called *ghamal* where public business is carried on, business concerning individual joint-families being carried on in family lodges called *na-tamp* closely associated with the graves of the ancestral dead. Each of the groups in the progressive bisection of the community is apt to become hostile to its opposing group. On the other hand, each pair of groups combines in ritual activities leading to cohesion, or in the face of a common foe. In every case, whether in matters affecting ritual cooperation or warlike preparation, whether in family affairs or in affairs affecting the whole island, the final decision depends on an informed public opinion led by the older members of the group in conclave. Similar social groupings, modified by a more recent intrusive culture from the Malekulan mainland, obtain in the remaining islands of the group. In all the islands descent is predominantly patrilineal, marriage being regulated along strictly exogamous lines as between patrilineal groups varying in size from the single village to (in the case of Wala) the entire island, as well as matrilineally between relatives tracing common descent extending to three generations backward on the mother's side. Marriages, equally strictly regulated, also occur (and in the island of Wala necessarily do occur) with members of mainland villages and with members of other islands within the ethnic group, whose dialects are known to one another in such a way that every native is acquainted with at least three and often more than three distinct languages.

This complex social organization and linguistic ability presuppose no mean intelligence, and are accompanied by, and intimately bound up with, a genealogical and historical sense unrivalled in Melanesia, to be compared only, so far as the Pacific is concerned, with that of the Polynesians, with whom these people have close cultural connections. On Atchin exact pedigrees, checked by various means, reach back for seventeen generations, and include detailed accounts of the doings of many of the figures appearing in them as well as the ancestry of the various inter-related joint-families which together build up the village organization.

These pedigrees are not only orally preserved. The natives' memories are also kept green by the numerous megalithic monuments which form their most striking memorial. It was the then barely known existence of such monuments, first published by Speiser (1913) that attracted the late

[1] This completely symmetrical arrangement occurs only in the Vao village of Petchul. Organization in the remaining villages has been slightly modified owing to influence from Atchin and elsewhere.

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Dr. W. H. R. Rivers and myself to Malekula.[1] These monuments, which include dolmens, monoliths, stone-platforms, cairns, and circles, primarily and to this day still associated with mortuary ritual, reach their highest development in connection with the great sacrificial rite called *Maki*, the name given in these islands to a socio-religious hierarchy corresponding to the Mangke of the Big Nambas, based on identification with the ancestors and with a mythical hawk. This rite is at once the great unifying factor in these islands and at the same time the most frequent cause of the intensest rivalry. In most parts of Malekula the rite is an individual one, performed by one man at a time, and consists of a number of grades which last a life-time in the taking. In Atchin and the neighbouring islands however, owing to their possession of an anomalous kinship system closely allied to the six-class system of relationship discovered by Deacon on Ambrym, it is a communal one, all men of alternate generations within any given village sacrificing at once. The sacrificial animal is the tusked boar, from which the upper canines have been removed in order to allow unimpeded growth to the tusks, which curve round, re-enter the jaw, and, if the boar is allowed to live, finally emerge again and, in rare instances, make three complete circles. The rearing of these boars is an extremely skilled process in which the inhabitants of these islands excel all others, and is accompanied by many magical performances. These boars are graded according to the size of their tusks at any given moment, and also, while alive, serve as currency for the purchase of wives, for ceremonial exchange between affinal relatives, and for innumerable other purposes. It is thus no small indication of the importance of the *Maki* in native life that it is not unusual at the culminating point of one of these protracted rites for as many as five hundred of these valuable tusked boars, each worth from ten to forty pounds in English money, to be sacrificed at once.

There are two kinds, or to borrow an ecclesiastical term, uses, of *Maki* in these islands. In the older form, still practised in the village of Petehul on Vao, there are two monuments only, a large dolmen and a stone-platform, at each of which the sacrifice is made.

In the newer use as practised on Atchin ten shrines are erected along one side of the dancing-ground, each consisting of a dolmen, a monolith, and a carved wooden image representing the ancestral spirit, surmounted by a roof of which the ridge-pole, resting on the head of the image, represents the head and wings of the mythical hawk. By the side of each shrine nine further dolmens or monoliths (depending on which group of alternate generations is performing the rite) are erected, which, joined together, form a continuous line of a hundred stones. Behind all these stand two stone platforms, also furnished with images and roofed, one for each of the two social groups called "Side of the Stone," and on the other side of the dancing-ground is another continuous line of a hundred small stones. These stones all represent ancestors, and it is to them and to the images that the sacrificial boars are tied. The complete *Maki* which, as has been said, is alternately performed by men of alternate generations, is a protracted composite rite lasting, in its extended form, for anything between fifteen and thirty years, during which an almost

[1] Dr. Rivers stayed only eight days, after which he took a passing motor launch to Tangoa.

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endless series of minor rites are performed, each involving the sacrifice of numerous tusked boars and an enormous expenditure of food for feasts. Each village performs its own rite in its own time, and the major rites attract guests from all other villages on the island, as well as from other islands and from the Malekulan mainland. There are numerous dance-cycles, frequently lasting all night, and finally, before the supreme sacrifice, for five days and nights on end. Each dance-cycle has its own songs, many of which commemorate the deeds of ancestors, and its peculiar gong-rhythms beaten on an orchestra of upright slit-gongs. Some of the songs are of surpassing beauty, and the gong-rhythms are so complicated that no European has yet been known to master them. Interspersed between the dance-cycles performed at stated intervals throughout the rite are a series of formal square dances and dramatic performances called *na-leng*,[1] many of which have become secularized, but some of which remain traditional and form a running commentary on the mythological background of the rite. This, as I hope to show in a forthcoming work, is none other than a dramatization of the Malekulan version of the journey of the dead, briefly described by me in a recent article (1934), which itself forms part of the mythology of megalithic peoples as far apart as the Nagas in Assam, the inhabitants of the Tamil country of Southern India, peoples of the Near East, of the Mediterranean littoral, and, in our own islands, of ancient Scotland, and in Scandinavia.

The bearers of this megalithic civilization were a maritime and river-loving people or peoples, the details of whose adventurous migrations yet remain to be worked out in detail—there have been at least two separate migrations of them into Malekula—but there can be little doubt that from Scandinavia to Malekula and beyond they have a common origin. One of the greatest interests to us therefore in Malekula is the fact that it is not impossible that, in the ritual of the *Maki* and in the beliefs associated with it, we may see a variant of one aspect at least of what some of our own forefathers, the megalith builders of Britain, did and thought. This rite is also one of fertility and of re-birth, each participant marking his assumption of new life by taking a new name, usually that of a maternal ancestor. The sacrifice of tusked boars is known on Atchin, both by precept and through historical tradition, to be a substitute for former human sacrifice, and those who make the highest sacrifice take oaths to keep the peace for varying periods, extending to three years, or, in the case of old men, a lifetime. Though cannibalism still exists, it is contrary to present *Maki* practice, but its close association with more ancient religious forms is still evident in that when an enemy is wounded, a dolmen, similar to that erected in the older *Maki* use, is hastily constructed in the bush, and the body is placed upon it and there ritually sacrificed, the victor thereupon taking a new name as in the *Maki* proper.

Though the wooden images of ancestors and hawks, and the roofs erected over the stone monuments rot, the stone themselves are never taken down, and remain as a memorial to those who sacrificed at them, whose stones they are henceforth said to be. I have shown elsewhere (1928) that monolith and wooden image combined represent an earlier form in which there was no

[1] See Mr. Harrisson's reference to similar performances among the Big Nambas, p. 332.

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105 wooden image and the monolith itself was carved to represent the ancestral human form, the wooden image having been added only when the art of carving stone was lost, so that what was originally a stone statue became split into two parts, of which the portrait, being of wood, in time disappears, and the plain monolith only remains. Though in Atchin the ritual has become so elaborate as to have largely obscured its original significance, there can be no doubt that in its earlier forms, as still in South-West Bay, the monolith actually represented, and was deemed to be inhabited by, the ghosts of all those ancestors who had previously performed the rite, and, after death, the new sacrificer himself. Hence its importance as a memorial and in the preservation of genealogies and history. Many of the more important figures in Atchin history are thus commemorated, both by their stones and by the preservation of their graves. So strong is the association of ancestors with stones that in semi-mythical accounts they are frequently stated to have had the power to turn themselves into stone during life-time, or to have actually become stone when they died. This process has been carried yet further in the case of those figures associated with the mythology connected with the journey of the dead, who are now to be seen as natural coral blocks standing at various points on the coast along the path trodden by the ghosts of the dead on their way to their future home.

105 There is no space to do more than mention a few of the most important in the long list of ritual activities in this rich civilization: activities in connection [881] with the belief in ancestors and rites of communion with them; the protracted mortuary ritual; initiation lasting nine months with an intensive period of thirty days in which continuous hoaxes are practised on the luckless novices; the operation of incision; rites connected with the consecration of the long-distance canoes capable of carrying thirty men on trading expeditions to other islands for as far as 80 miles over open sea; a special form of sex initiation performed on the distant island of Omba; the consecration of houses and of tusked boars; magic; their economic life, their fishing, gardening, and trading; their laws of copyright whereby nothing is given, but everything, such as songs, dances, variations in ritual, whole rites, magical formulae, designs for the carving of ancestor-images and of canoe figure-heads, details of house construction and decoration, and a hundred other aspects of their artistically rich culture, is sold by these intensely commercial people at high prices and with due ceremony from individual to individual, village to village, and island to island, thus constituting the framework for the dissemination and blending of endless variations of culture; history and tradition.

105 One other feature must be mentioned on account of its bearing on the coming 996 of the whites. Mr. Harrisson has already referred to the white-skinned, aquiline-nosed immigrants, who are said to have introduced the latest phases of megalithic culture into that area. On Atchin the equivalent culture-hero is a being called Ta-har, corresponding to the Polynesian Tanggaloa, Banks Islands Tagaro, and the Big Nambas Horo, regarded in Atchin as the benign creator, who is at once a stone and the moon, who made the islands and gave their inhabitants their languages, who arrived in a canoe and introduced the pig and the coconut to ten legendary petromorphic brothers standing on

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the shore, and whose name, in spite of his sexual activities which they may not have known about, the missionaries subsequently adopted as a fitting translation for the word God. 105 176

(*b*) *Conditions in Atchin in* 1914

In considering the reaction of the people of Atchin to the coming of the white man it will be of use to bear one principle in mind. Anthropological research shows that culture contact, if it be not too uneven by reason of the too great predominance of one party over the other, is one of the prime causes of vitality and progress; that too great stability, on the other hand, almost always leads to decay. Although the nature of the contact between the whites and natives was one of overbearing disparity, and so was not conducive to progress, the situation was remarkably mitigated in Atchin by the existence of culture movements within the native system itself prior to the white man's advent. In the three islands of Vao, Atchin, and Wala, the phenomena both of progress and of decay were thus already at work. Among the many movements of culture occurring in Malekula within comparatively recent times, there arose some eight generations ago a new centre of diffusion at a spot on the Malekulan mainland opposite Wala. The new form of culture spread first to Wa'a, which, on the subsequent extinction of the mainland villages, became its classic home. Vao still remained the stronghold of the earlier form of culture previously common to all three islands. Atchin was a half-way house between the two, incessantly acquiring new rites from Wala and passing them on, through the slow methods of ceremonial purchase, to Vao. Both Wala, the classic home, and Vao, which at that time was only beginning to adopt the new rites and beliefs, were at the time of my visit comparatively stagnant, and the people of Atchin, being, through the constant changes that were taking place, looser in mind, were at the same time in all ways more progressive. This chance of history has, to my mind, been of no little importance in conditioning the type of reaction on the part of all three islands to the disturbing fact of the arrival of the whites, whom the Atchin people have withstood with much greater success than either of the other islands, and by whom they were consequently both more feared and more respected. 178

Mr. Harrisson has been good enough to say that a further contributing factor was the timely visit of the anthropologist at a moment of great stress in the history of Atchin, two months after a serious conflict with the government, which, under normal circumstances, might well have led to a punitive expedition. Whether this is the case I am not in a position to judge. It may however be worth stating that I was, so far as I know, at that time the only white man in the group (with the possible exception of Catholic missionaries) who was unarmed and who expressed appreciation for their culture. It would however in my opinion be untrue to say that this attitude of admiration did more than encourage them in a standpoint they had already taken up—a determination that at all hazards they must maintain their own cultural integrity, even to the point of settling their own disputes if possible without warfare in face of common danger.

One of the white man's great complaints against the natives has always been

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their quarrelsomeness among themselves. This characteristic is undeniable,[1] but was mitigated before the coming of the white man by the fact that, living in dense bush and being but poor shots with bows and arrows, the amount of life sacrificed in the course of their wars was very small. Wars would drag on for months without a death. With the advent of the shot-gun matters however suddenly changed. What had before been little more than semi-ritual quarrels assumed quite different dimensions, and the coastal peoples, who were the first to obtain firearms, slaughtered their enemies without mercy. The old rule that wars could not cease till the number of dead, rarely more than one or two, was equal on both sides (this alone showing its ritual nature) no longer held when these were multiplied by tens, and war then came to mean the extermination of entire villages. In this way the people of Atchin had themselves assisted in the complete extermination of entire mainland communities, so that where before the white man's arrival there were flourishing villages was now waste bush. In this way almost the entire population of the semi-coastal villages of north-east Malekula, as well as large sections of the population of Atchin itself, had been destroyed, so that the numbers even on this island had been reduced from what are said to have totalled something in the neighbourhood of 1000 to, at the time of my visit, 401. This had made the natives of Atchin think, and their constant cry was, contrary to the opinion of most white men, "How can we combine to save ourselves?"

One method they adopted was, after the expulsion of the last trader, to allow no alcohol on the island. Though passionately fond of drink when they could get it, they had seen enough of its effects and had themselves evolved such a strong public opinion on the subject that no drink was allowed on the island, though it is true that rare passing cutters reaped a brief reward from some of the younger men.

In matters concerning their own culture there was an increasing disapproval of sorcery. How far this was due to the influence of the white man it is difficult to say. It is however a fact that on all the small islands sorcerers, or suspected sorcerers, were finding life considerably less easy than formerly, as the number of refugee sorcerers on Atchin alone showed.

More important, more concrete than these however was their determination to rebuild and reinforce the best elements in their own culture through the performance, ever more magnificently, of the *Maki* rite. One man, almost alone of the decimated Atchin village of Emil Marur, who had spent years on white men's plantations and at the end had been tricked of all his earnings, was busy during the whole of my stay carving the ten images needed for the rite and by intensive garden work and the rearing of pigs and the re-learning of the details of ritual from the older men, preparing for its performance in order to rehabilitate his and his kinsmen's spiritual and, through them, material fortunes. This man was Mari, who, in the clash with the government mentioned above, was in danger of being taken to prison in Vila for an imagined offence.

A similar case was that of Mataru on Vao, this time an erstwhile convert,

[1] The element of fear, though considerable, was never so great in the island populations as among the Big Nambas, owing to the comparative safety afforded by the sea and the greater breadth of outlook gained through trade with other islands.

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who had returned to his own people and was busy reviving the fortunes of his village in the same way. These two men were among my best informants, since they themselves were conscious learners from the older men and, like all learners, the most capable of passing on their knowledge.

Nor were the people of Atchin averse to using such aspects of the white man's material culture as would seem to them to further their interests. Though stone tools were still used for gardening and shell tools for carving, some natives possessed knives, but such things were not common, and the degradation in plastic art which everywhere followed on their introduction had, at the time of my visit, only recently begun to show itself. It seemed, by the way, most curious to me that, with the tremendous labour of digging in hard ground with nothing better than hard-wood sticks, no white man had thought of introducing more efficient agricultural implements, but none such existed. The hard-earned white man's money obtained on distant plantations was used almost exclusively with two objects in view. One was the purchase of whaleboats to replace their former long-distance canoes in order to facilitate the trade in and exchange of pigs in other islands. The second, closely connected with it, had as its result the only real benefit conferred by the white man, indirectly and without his knowledge, on the native. When I arrived on Atchin I was surprised at the number of young men who spoke pidgin English. It was not till I had been some time on the island that the reason for this became apparent. One of the least desirable aspects of the social system in this and the neighbouring islands was polygamy which, since most of the older men had two wives, effectually prevented the younger men from marrying until a comparatively late age. Wives are bought with the most valuable currency known in Atchin, namely pigs. So the younger men seized the opportunity created by the system of indentured labour to sign on for three years, without, like other natives, running up debts at the trader's store, so that with the money thus earned they might, on their return, buy pigs with which to purchase wives. This wholly beneficial revolution in the social machinery was in full swing at the time of my visit, but Mr. Harrisson tells me, and this is one of the most interesting points of comparison between then and now, that the old men have now turned tables on the young, and by devaluing the pig in terms of women and increasing the bride-price from eight or nine pigs to fifty or sixty, have thus restored the old equilibrium, and incidentally, presumably, their own authority. When we reflect upon the fact that the young men twenty-two years ago are the older men now we have a useful sidelight on one of the mechanisms governing the rise and fall of revolutions.

Another effect of the increased wealth in pigs thus gained was the elimination of the lower grades from the *Maki* hierarchy. This process was not primarily due to the wealth so gained, but, like so many other changes in native custom, was very much accentuated by it. In all other parts of Malekula the *Maki*, as has already been pointed out, is a graded hierarchy in which the grades are taken by individuals, and the taking of them demands great expenditure of pigs and other forms of wealth, so that when a man has reached the highest grade called *Mal* he is a very great man and jealous of his distinction. The tendency in such districts was consequently to increase the number of pre-

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liminary grades in order to enhance the dignity of those few who had reached the highest rank. In Atchin, on the other hand, owing to the communal nature of the rite and the mutual help afforded by every member of the village community to every other member, a contrary process was at work, the lower grades being already in process of elimination before the arrival of the white man. With the acquisition of the new wealth this process became speeded up, with the result that by the time of my visit they had all disappeared, so that each and every man, youth, and male piccaninny on the island who was capable of sacrificing a pig belonged to the grade *Mal*, much to the chagrin of those in other communities who had taken a lifetime achieving it. Even the older men on Atchin felt somewhat abashed by the general levelling-up, and, in order to assert their own superiority, a new supernumerary grade had been invented, called *Mel-teg*, literally "The *Mal* who stays at home," referring to the vows of abstinence taken after the *Maki*. It is amusing and significant to note that, according to Mr. Harrisson, the young men have again asserted their equality and that now most men on Atchin possess the title *Mel-teg*, and apparently for the moment, in this respect at any rate, democracy has reasserted itself, for there is no record of any further supernumerary grade.

The younger generation of natives made use of the white man's coming not only in the direction of freeing themselves from the domination of the older men. With the acute dramatic sense which is the essence of their culture they had also made up to some extent for other deprivations which the white man had brought about by using both him and his inventions for the enhancement of their already rich ritual life. Pantomimic representations of various aspects of the white man's activities had been incorporated into the dramatic repertory of the *na-leng* plays and dances, muskets were used to heighten the effect of ritual combats during the sex-initiatory expedition to Omba, into the more serious initiation rites on Atchin, in which hoaxes are performed on the initiates, more than one white man's *tour de force* was incorporated, and many of the masks and images were made lurid by means of Reckett's blue.

It is however significant to note that, even in the case of such a wide departure from native tradition as the abandonment of the manufacture of their own long-distance canoes in favour of white men's whale-boats, the old consecration rites were still continued. At one such consecration rite at which I was present over sixty valuable tusked boars were sacrificed, and the supreme sacrifice was that of a bullock, obtained from a trader, for which all the complicated sacrificial ritual was performed; while in the pantomimic dances the skulls of a bullock and two goats were used as masks.

One final word as to the causes of depopulation. At the time of my visit the population was on the decline. Of physical causes the chief was, as has been seen, the introduction of the musket which turned comparatively harmless semi-ritual combats into lethal battles. Second to this, the introduction of diseases, mainly of dysentery, which wiped out whole families. As to the psychological causes put forward by Rivers and others but denied by Mr. Harrisson, all I am able to say quite definitely is that there was at that time a general belief among the older men and some of the young ones that the race was doomed. The old men remembered the day when native culture was the highest achievement of the human race as they conceived it. The appearance

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of the white man made this position untenable, and they could conceive no possible compromise. If the white man stayed they must die out, as had so many of their neighbours. Some of the young men also said, "What, if this be the case, is the use of rearing children?" and there is no doubt that among this section of the community abortions were common, as pedigrees bear out in the clear diminution of the number of births. There was however a third section of the community, the younger men who had never known the time before the white man came, who were already born into an atmosphere of inevitable compromise, for whom the glamour of the white man's superior material civilization was tempered with a shrewd sense of his weaknesses and some knowledge of how to deal with him. These were the men who were bent on rehabilitating Atchin culture, while at the same time incorporating into it such new elements as seemed not to conflict too greatly with it. One such was Lawak, then my chief friend and informant, now, according to Mr. Harrisson, the most influential man on the island, who had spent two years of his youth in the French penal settlement of Noumea, who was one of the few young men of my day to take to him two wives, and who, his first wife being sick, himself reared her baby son by feeding him on the juices of fruits; nor shall I ever forget his delight when the boy first began to run. I must confess that in 1914, while admiring their efforts, I had little hope in their ultimate success. Time has shown otherwise. The population has increased and is increasing now. It is to such men as Lawak who, through knowledge of the white man and how to deal with him, had hope in the future but at the same time preserved their independence of mind and love of their own culture, that the present increase in population and renaissance of culture is due.

The author is hoping to publish a detailed account of the social organization, religion, language, music, and sea-faring activities of the inhabitants of the small islands off the north-east coast of Malekula, in a series of volumes entitled, 'Stone Men of Malekula.' The first volume, dealing with the island of Vao, is to appear this autumn.

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